Tafsir Ibn Kathir

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah

Al-Bayyinah

Revealed in Makkah

The Messenger of Allah recited this Surah to Ubayy

Imam Ahmad recorded from Anas bin Malik that the Messenger of Allah said to Ubayy bin Ka\`b,

إِنَّ اللهَ أَمَرَنِي أَنْ أَقْرَأَ عَلَيْكَ :

" لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَـبِ "

Verily, Allah has commanded me to recite to you:

"Those who disbelieve from among the People of the Scripture."

Ubayy said, "He (Allah) mentioned me by name to you''

The Prophet replied, Yes.

So he (Ubayy) cried.

Al-Bukhari, Muslim, At-Tirmidhi and An-Nasa'i all recorded this Hadith from Shu\`bah.

Al-Bayyinah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَـنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَـبِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ
حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ مُنفَكِّينَ

98.1 Those who disbelieve from among the People of the Scripture and the idolators, were not going to leave until there came to them the Bayyinah.

رَسُولٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ يَتْلُو صُحُفاً مُّطَهَّرَةً

98.2 A Messenger from Allah reciting purified pages.

فِيهَا كُتُبٌ قَيِّمَةٌ

98.3 Wherein are upright Books.

وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ الْكِتَـبَ إِلاَّ مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَتْهُمُ
الْبَيِّنَةُ

98.4 And the People of the Scripture differed not until after there came to them the Bayyinah.

وَمَآ أُمِرُواْ إِلاَّ لِيَعْبُدُواْ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَآءَ
وَيُقِيمُواْ الصَّلَوةَ وَيُؤْتُواْ الزَّكَوةَ وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقَيِّمَةِ

98.5 for Him alone, Hunafa', and that they perform Salah and give Zakah, and that is the right religion.

Mentioning the Situation of the Disbelievers among the People of the Scripture and the Idolators

لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنفَكِّينَ حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ
الْبَيِّنَةُ (١)

Those who disbelieve from among the People of the Scripture and idolators, were not going to leave until there came to them the **Bayyinah**.

As for the People of the Scripture, they are the Jews and the Christians, and the idolators are the worshippers of idols and fire among the Arabs and the non-Arabs.

Mujahid said, they are not going **مُنفَكِّينَ** (to leave)

> "Meaning, they will not be finished until the truth becomes clear to them.''

Qatadah also said the same thing. **حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ** until there came to them the **Bayyinah**. meaning, this Qur'an.

This is why Allah says,

> لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنفَكِّينَ حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ
>
> Those who disbelieve from among the People of the Scripture and idolators, were not going to leave until there came to them the **Bayyinah**.

Then He explains what the **Bayyinah** is by His saying,

> رَسُولٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ يَتْلُو صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً (٢)
>
> A Messenger from Allah, reciting purified pages.
>
> meaning, Muhammad and the Magnificent Qur'an he recites, which is written down among the most high gathering in purified pages.
>
> This is similar to Allah's statement,
>
> فِى صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ
>
> مَّرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ
>
> بِأَيْدِى سَفَرَةٍ
>
> كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ
>
> In Records held in honor. Exalted, purified, in the hands of scribes (angels). Honorable and obedient. (80:13-16)

Then Allah says,

فِيهَا كُتُبٌ قَيِّمَةٌ (٣)

Wherein are upright Books.

Ibn Jarir said,

> "Meaning in the purified pages are Books from Allah that are upright, just and straight. They have no mistakes in them because they are from Allah, the Mighty and Majestic."

The Differing only occurred after the Knowledge came

Allah says,

وَمَا تَفَرَّقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ (٤)

And the People of the Scripture differed not until after there came to them the **Bayyinah**.

This is similar to Allah's statement,

> وَلاَ تَكُونُواْ كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُواْ وَاخْتَلَفُواْ مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَـتُ وَأُوْلَـئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ
>
> And be not as those who divided and differed among themselves after the **Bayyinat** came to them. It is they for whom there is an awful torment. (3:105)

This refers to the people of those divinely revealed Scriptures that were sent down to the nations that were before us. After Allah established the proofs and evidences against them, they divided and differed concerning that which Allah had intended in their Scriptures, and they had many differences.

This is like what has been reported in a Hadith that has many routes of transmission,

> إِنَّ الْيَهُودَ اخْتَلَفُوا عَلَى إِحْدَى وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً،
>
> وَإِنَّ النَّصَارَى اخْتَلَفُوا عَلَى ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً، وَسَتَفْتَرِقُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةُ عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً، كُلُّهَا فِي النَّارِ إِلَّا وَاحِدَة

- Verily, the Jews differed until they became seventy-one sects.

- And verily, the Christians differed until they became seventy-two sects.

- And this Ummah will divide into seventy-three sects, and all of them will be in the Fire except one.

They said, "Who are they, O Messenger of Allah''

He replied,

مَا أنَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَصْحَابِي

(Those who are upon), what I and my Companions are upon.

The Command of Allah was merely that They make their Religion solely for Him

Allah says,

وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ ....

And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allah, making religion purely for Him alone,

This is similar to Allah's statement,

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلاَّ نُوحِى إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لا إِلَـهَ إِلاَّ أَنَاْ فَاعْبُدُونِ

And We did not send any Messenger before you but We revealed to him: **La ilaha illa Ana**. (21:25)

Thus, Allah says,

... حُنَفَاء...

Hunafa'

meaning, avoiding Shirk and being truly devout to Tawhid.

This is like Allah's statement,

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِى كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولاً أَنِ اعْبُدُواْ اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُواْ الْطَّـغُوتَ

And Verily, We have sent among every Ummah a Messenger (proclaiming): "Worship Allah, and avoid the **Taghut** (false deities).'' (16:36)

A discussion of the word **Hanif** has already been mentioned previously and in Surah **Al-An`am**, so there is no need to repeat it here.

... وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ ...

and perform Salah,

And this is the best of the physical forms of worship.

... وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ...

and give **Zakah**,

This is doing good to the poor and the needy.

...وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقَيِّمَةِ (٥)

and that is the right religion.

meaning, the upright and just religion, or the nation that is straight and balanced.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَـبِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ فِى نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خَـلِدِينَ فِيهَآ أُوْلَـئِكَ هُمْ شَرُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ

98:6. Verily, those who disbelieve from among the People of the Scripture and idolators, will abide in the fire of Hell. They are the worst of creatures.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّـلِحَـتِ أُوْلَـئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ

98:7 Verily, those who believe and do righteous good deeds, they are the best of creatures.

جَزَآؤُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّـتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَـرُ خَـلِدِينَ فِيهَآ أَبَداً رِّضِىَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُواْ عَنْهُ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِىَ رَبَّهُ

98:8 Their reward with their Lord is Eternal Gardens, underneath which rivers flow. They will abide therein forever, Allah will be pleased with them, and they well-pleased with Him. That is for him who fears his Lord.

Mentioning the Worse and Best of Creation and Their Recompense

Allah says,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ...

Allah informs of what will happen to the wicked disbelievers among the People of the Scripture and the idolators who oppose the Allah's divinely revealed Books and the Prophets whom He sent.

He says,

....فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ...

that they will be in the fire of Hell on the Day of Judgement and they will abide therein forever.

This means that they will remain in it and they will have no way out of it and they will not cease being in it.

...أُوْلَئِكَ هُمْ شَرُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ (٦)

They are the worst of creatures.

meaning, they are the worst creation that Allah has fashioned and created.

Then Allah informs about the situation of the righteous people who believed in their hearts and performed righteous deeds with their bodies.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ...

Verily, those who believe and do righteous good deeds,

He says that they are the best of creation.

... أُوْلَئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ (٧)

they are the best of creatures.

Abu Hurayrah and a group of the scholars have used this Ayah as a proof that the believers have a status among the creatures that is better than the angels. This is because Allah says, أُوْلَـئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ (They are the best of creatures).

Then Allah says,

جَزَاؤُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ ...

Their reward with their Lord,

meaning, on the Day of Judgement.

... جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا...

is Eternal Gardens underneath which rivers flow. They will abide therein forever,

meaning, having no end, no break and no conclusion.

... رَّضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ...

Allah will be pleased with them, and they well-pleased with Him.

The condition of Him being pleased with them is more illustrious than all of the everlasting delights that they will be given.

وَرَضُواْ عَنْهُ and they well-pleased with Him, Due to the comprehensive favors He has given them.

Then Allah says,

... ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ رَبَّهُ (٨)

That is for him who fears his Lord.

meaning, this is the reward that will be attained by those who revere Allah and fear Him as He deserves to be feared. This is the person who worships Allah as if he sees Him, and he knows that even though he does not see Him, indeed Allah sees him.

Imam Ahmad recorded from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah said, Shall I not inform you of the best of creation?

They said, "Of course, O Messenger of Allah!''

He said,

رَجُلٌ آخِذٌ بِعِنَانِ فَرَسِهِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ، كُلَّمَا كَانَتْ هَيْعَةٌ اسْتَوَى عَلَيْهِ.

A man who takes the reins of his horse in the way of Allah, and whenever there is a fearful cry from the enemy, he climbs upon it.

Shall I not inform you of the best of creation?

They said, "Of course, O Messenger of Allah!''

He said,

رَجُلٌ فِي ثُلَّةٍ مِنْ غَنَمِهِ، يُقِيمُ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتِي الزَّكَاةَ.

A man who has a flock of sheep and he establishes the prayer and gives the obligatory charity.

Shall I not inform you of the worst of creation?

They said, "Of course.''

He said,

الَّذِي يُسْأَلُ بِاللهِ وَلَا يُعْطِي بِه

The person who is asked by Allah and he does not give by Him.

This is the end of the Tafsir of Surah **Al-Bayyinah**, and all praise and thanks are due to Allah.